

Historic, Archive Document

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Food Safety Across the U.S.A.

2005

Celebrating 20 Years of the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline!



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

aTX533
.F66
2004

Welcome to the USDA Food Safety Planner

United States
Department of
Agriculture



Throughout this planner, you'll find food safety information, ideas, and topics you can use to help you get the word out.

- Online r
- Cooking
- Food Sa

Meet Karen . . .

She's a "Virtual" Abundance of Food Safety!



It's 3:00 a.m. Do you know where your leftovers are?

Yikes! You fell asleep and forgot to put your leftovers in the refrigerator – and now you're ready for a pre-dawn snack. But are these morsels still safe to eat? And what's more – is there anybody awake you can even ask?

24/7

Enter Karen – USDA's new "virtual representative." She's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer your food safety questions!

Karen represents the latest in technology and offers food safety advice around the clock. She has a wealth of information at her fingertips. In fact, her extensive database includes answers to more than 4,000 questions!

She can provide detailed information on . . .

- Safe storage, preparation, and handling of meat, poultry, and egg products.
- Prevention of foodborne illness and disease.

More than just a technological marvel, Karen embodies yet another way USDA reaches out to consumers in support of its public health mission to assure the safety and security of America's food supply.

So jump on the virtual bandwagon – and "Ask Karen"! Go to:

www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/ask_karen/

Working with Karen

- Type your question – or just the subject area and/or keywords – in the text box and select "Ask." The answer to your question will appear below the dotted line.
- If Karen is unable to answer your exact question, she will suggest a list of related questions. For information, select the "Help" button.
- Karen also provides links to other Web pages with additional information.

National Agricultural Library

Food Safety Education

Ask Karen



I'm Karen, the FSIS Virtual Representative. I am an automated response system, available 24/7.

I can answer inquiries from the public about the prevention of foodborne illness, as well as the safe handling, preparation, and storage of meat, poultry, and egg products, from an extensive database of food safety information.

Please type your question below.

How can I keep leftovers safe?

Bacteria begin to multiply rapidly in the danger zone between 40 °F (recommended refrigerator temperature) and 140 °F. Therefore, food left out at room temperature will become unsafe in a matter of hours. Refrigerate leftovers at 40 °F or below or freeze (0 °F) as soon as possible, but never leave food out more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if the outside temperature is above 90 °F. Divide leftovers into shallow containers. This encourages rapid, even cooling. Cover with airtight lids or enclose in plastic wraps or aluminum foil. Use refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days, or freeze them for longer storage. For more information, select "Help" above or call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854).

Got a food safety question? Just go to www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/ask_karen/

Publications, E-mail Updates, and More!

"Ask Karen" is one of the newest educational offerings from the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). But there are many other nifty resources available to you, too. In addition to the knowledge offered by the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline staff, the FSIS Web site offers a wealth of **consumer publications** for use in your media and outreach efforts – including PDFs of many publications. So click on over to see the whole assortment!

What's Available Online?

Here is just a sampling of the hundreds of brochures, fact sheets, and press releases you can find online at www.fsis.usda.gov!

Protect Your Baby and Yourself from Listeria

An informative flyer specifically targeted to this at-risk population. www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/foodborne_illness_&_disease_fact_sheets/



Cooking for Groups

A handy guide for those organizing potlucks, charity events, and even family reunions. www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/safe_food_handling_fact_sheets/



Therm'y™: Use a Food Thermometer

A must-have brochure that includes a safe cooking temperature chart. www.fsis.usda.gov/education/thermy_for_educators/



Let's Talk Turkey

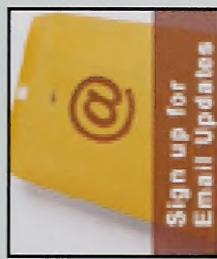
This handy brochure should be on everyone's shopping list! www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/safe_food_handling_fact_sheets/



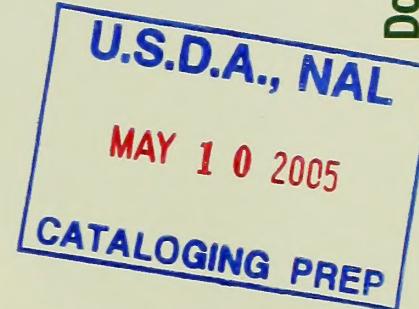
Be The First To Know!

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service has another great feature – and it's *ideal* for those who are busy meeting press deadlines and organizing community outreach events.

Our new E-mail subscription service notifies you whenever items you subscribe to are updated. Now you can more easily manage the abundance of online information – **because it comes to you when something is new!**



Look for this icon to sign up at
www.fsis.usda.gov

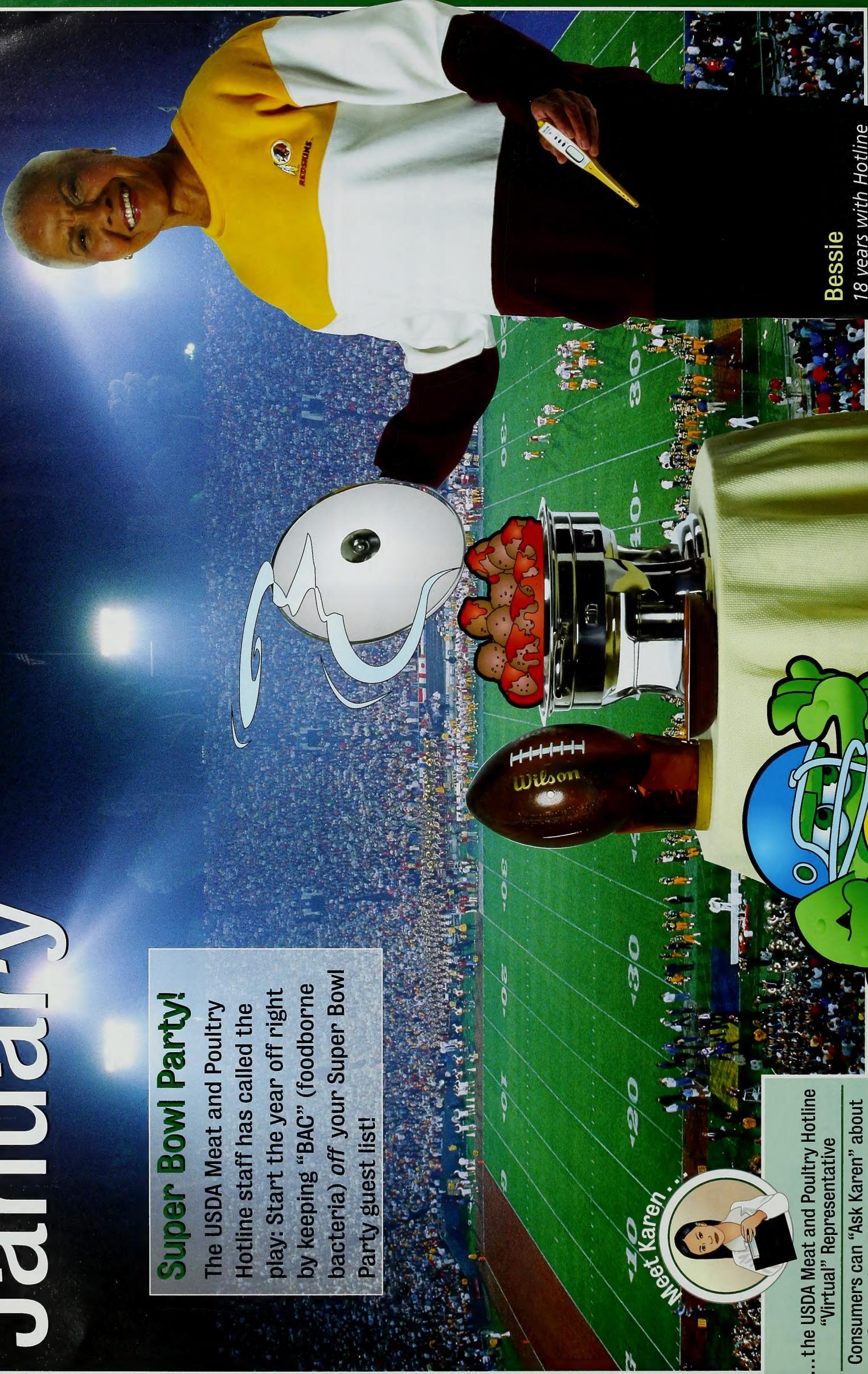


**Facing a press deadline?
Don't miss the camera-ready
artwork on the inside
back cover!**

January

Super Bowl Party!

The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline staff has called the play: Start the year off right by keeping "BAC" (foodborne bacteria) off your Super Bowl Party guest list!



...the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
"Virtual" Representative

Consumers can "Ask Karen" about
food safety 24 hours a day,
7 days a week!

www.fsis.usda.gov

Bessie

18 years with Hotline

- Avid gardener
- Tennis fan
- Art student

January

Hotline Hot Topics

Kick off your event with an assortment of trophy-worthy foods . . . but while the players reach the end zone, remember to avoid the **"Danger Zone" — the bacteria-friendly temperatures between 40 and 140 °F.**

You and your guests will stay food-safe with this game plan for tackling "BAC" at your buffet:

- Hot foods should be kept hot at 140 °F or above. Keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays.
- Cold foods should be kept cold, at 40 °F or below. Place containers of cold food on ice to keep the food safe.
- Check temperatures with a food thermometer.
- Keep buffet portions small and replenish often with fresh platters.

Food Safety Education on Wheels

The USDA Food Safety Mobile was launched in 2003 and has been traveling coast to coast educating consumers about food safety ever since! It offers a fabulous partnership opportunity for educators, USDA representatives, and media. It arrives stocked with education materials, cooking demo equipment, and even the Thermy™ and Fight BAC!® costumes!



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						New Year's Day
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"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: "How long can I keep turkey — or any meat or poultry product — in the freezer?"

A: "For optimal quality, you can keep a turkey in the freezer for a year. However, as with any meat and poultry product, the quality may be reduced with long-term storage. From a safety standpoint, you can keep meat or poultry in the freezer indefinitely." (See the Cold Storage Chart in the back.)

Contact Info



TTY:
1-800-256-7072

E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

February

Roses Are Red . . .

The Hotline staff takes food safety to heart . . . so they remind you not to let "BAC" crash your dinner for two!



Maribel

2 years with Hotline

- Bilingual Food Safety Specialist



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February

Hotline Hot Topics

Follow these tips for staying safe whether eating out or staying in.

- Choose menu items that are **thoroughly cooked**. If it appears that any food, such as beef, pork, chicken, eggs, or fish is undercooked, send it back for additional cooking.
- If you take home a “**doggie bag**” – refrigerate it within 2 hours of serving. Reheat leftovers to 165 °F.
- Getting **take-out** to take home to your sweetie? Eat it within 2 hours – and don’t let the food sit out at room temperature while you’re leisurely sharing news of your day!

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Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

“Buenos días. ¿En qué puedo servirle?”

Q: “Should I use a wooden cutting board or a plastic one?”

A: “Either is fine – as long as you make sure they are properly cleaned. Wash cutting boards thoroughly after every use with hot, soapy water. The hotter the better. Once cutting boards become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves, discard them.”



Food Safety Education on Wheels

The Food Safety Mobile appears at State and county fairs, schools, libraries, grocery stores, community events, parades, festivals, health and safety expos, and conventions.

March

The Big Chill!

Even when thawing, temperature counts! The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline has some "chilling" advice on thawing food safely.



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March

Hotline Hot Topics

Follow these thawing guidelines to keep food safe:

- Defrost food **in the refrigerator**. This is the safest method for thawing perishable food.
- Short on time? Thaw meat and poultry in airtight packaging **in cold water**. Be sure to change the water every 30 minutes, so the food continues to thaw – but *never* defrost in hot water.
- Defrost food **in the microwave** only if it will be cooked immediately.
- Avoid defrosting in the “Danger Zone” – the unsafe temperatures between 40 and 140 °F within which bacteria can thrive. That means giving the cold shoulder to thawing food on the counter!

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Contact Info



Q: “Is it safe to refreeze food that has thawed completely?”
A: “It is safe to refreeze *only* if it has been thawed in the refrigerator at 40 °F or below, where bacteria haven’t had a chance to multiply.

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April

Spring Cleaning

The Meat and Poultry Hotline staff members are "clean freaks" by nature *and* by profession.

With various degrees in public health, dietetics, medicine, food science, home economics, and education, they all agree that "keeping it clean" should be the first step in all your food-related activities.



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www.fsis.usda.gov

Archie

1 year with Hotline

- Swimmer & family man
- Spent childhood in Lebanon and Greece



Hotline Hot Topics

The "Big Three" Cleaning Commandments:

1. Wash hands with warm, soapy water before and after food preparation and especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood.
2. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next food. A mixture of 1 teaspoon liquid chlorine bleach to 1 quart of water can provide added protection.
3. Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, launder them often in hot, soapy water.

Food Safety Education on Wheels

The USDA Food Safety Mobile is 36 feet long, 8.5 feet wide, 12 feet tall, and weighs about 23,000 pounds when loaded. It's emblazoned with bold, eye-catching graphics and prominent food safety messages.



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"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: "How can I tell if my hamburger is done?"

A: "The only way to tell if a hamburger (or any meat and poultry product) is done is by using a food thermometer. Cook hamburgers to 160 °F. (For other recommended temperatures, see the cooking temperature chart in the back.)



Contact Info

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1-888-MPHotline



TTY:
1-800-256-7072

E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

Way

Great Grilling!

The Hotline staff is "grilled" with questions on a daily basis – and with good reason!

They're the experts when it comes to safe food behaviors, including ways to keep "BAC" away from your barbecue.

Therm'y™



...the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
"Virtual" Representative

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www.fsis.usda.gov



Kathy
13 years with Hotline
• Horse and dog lover
• Mother of two

May

Hotline Hot Topics

Here are the Hotline's recommendations for safe grilling:

- Make a food thermometer your "must have" tool.
- Keep meat and poultry in the refrigerator or in an insulated cooler with a cold source until ready to grill.
- Always marinade foods in the refrigerator. Sauce that was used to marinade raw meat or poultry should not be reused on cooked foods, unless it is boiled first.
- Cook ground beef to 160 °F. Roasts and steaks may be cooked to 145 °F for medium rare or to 160 °F for medium. Cook chicken breasts to 170 °F. (For other foods, see the cooking temperature chart in the back.)
- Don't cross-contaminate! Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that previously held raw food without washing it first.

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Food Safety Education on Wheels

The USDA Food Safety Mobile has been in high demand since its launch. By the end of 2004, it had been to approximately 200 events and was visited by 600,000 people!

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"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: "How long can canned goods be stored?"

A: "Foods that are high in acid (like tomatoes, juices, and canned fruits) can be stored for 1 year to 18 months. Other canned goods (like beans, soups, or gravies) are best if used within 2 to 5 years. All canned goods should be stored in a cool, dry place – and if you see any bulging or seepage in seams, discard the can."



JUNE



Picture-Perfect Picnics!

The Hotline Staff is picky when it comes to picnic advice. Just because you're on the road doesn't mean you should leave food safety at home!

Eileen

2 years with Hotline

- Hiker
- Golfer
- Crossword puzzle fanatic
- UConn Husky fan



...the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
“Virtual” Representative

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www.fsis.usda.gov

June

Hotline Hot Topics

Keep it cold and clean and your picnic will be postcard-worthy.

- Start out safely by thoroughly washing hands before preparing, cooking, and serving foods. If soap and water are not available at the picnic site, bring disposable towelettes or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean hands.
- Always use ice or cold packs to pack your cooler once you fill it with food. A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than one that is partially filled.

- Don't eat perishable foods that have been left out of the cooler for more than 1 hour on a hot day (90 °F or higher).

Food Safety Education on Wheels

The Mobile's home base is in Beltsville, MD, just outside of FSIS headquarters in Washington, DC. But it is on the road across the U.S.A. for 10 to 11 months a year!



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"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: "Is it safe to leave perishable food out of the refrigerator overnight?"

A:

"No. Food that has been left out of the refrigerator too long may be dangerous to eat. If food has been left in the "Danger Zone" – between 40 and 140 °F – for more than 2 hours (1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F), discard it."

Contact Info

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E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

Web site:
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1-888-MPHotline



Olga
5 years with Hotline

- Doctor
- Grandmother and volleyball player
- Bilingual Food Safety Specialist

Hip Hip Hooray!

Happy Anniversary to the good ole U.S.A. (229 years) and the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline (20 years). Here's to celebrating food safety from coast to coast!

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www.fsis.usda.gov

July

Hotline Hot Topics

The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline is your source for food safety information – so keep their contact information close at hand. And don't forget to wish them a happy anniversary!

Toll-free Number:
1-888-MPHotline
(1-888-674-6854)

TTY:
1-800-256-7072

Via E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

Visit online:
www.fsis.usda.gov

Virtual Q&A:
www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/ask_karen/

Food Safety Education on Wheels

By the end of last year, the Food Safety Mobile had been reported on in approximately 250 articles including newspapers, television and radio stations, and Web sites.



Meat & Poultry Hotline
20th Anniversary

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Web site:
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Q: "What are 'use by' and 'sell by' dates? Is it a law for foods to have them?"

A: "Some States have 'date' laws, but there are no Federal regulations for them (except for baby formula). 'Use by' dates are usually generated at the processing plant and 'sell by' dates are added by the merchant. In any case, both are intended to ensure quality, not safety." (See Cold Storage Chart in the back.)

"Buenas tardes. ¿En qué puedo servirle?"

AUGUST

Back to School

Don't send "BAC" to school during back-to-school season! The Hotline has some A+ tips for packing safe lunches.



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www.fsis.usda.gov

Marva

11 years with Hotline

- Mother of two
- Music fan
- Furniture refinisher



August

Hotline Hot Topics

Keep lunch boxes food-safe with these guidelines:

- Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water and kitchen surfaces and utensils with hot, soapy water before and after preparing food.
- Take cold foods from the refrigerator and pack them in an insulated lunch box just before leaving. Include a cold pack.
- Hot foods, such as soup and chili, belong in an insulated container – but first fill the container with boiling water and let it stand for a few minutes to warm it up. Then, empty the container and fill it with piping hot food.
- Note: A parent or other adult should do this for children.*
- Don't let food sit at room temperature. Eat it right away or put it back in your lunch box with a frozen gel-pack.
- Be sure to wash out lunch boxes or totes every night!

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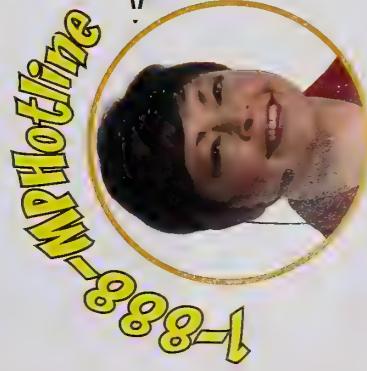
E-mail:
mhotline.fsis@usda.gov

Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: "What type of food thermometer should I use when cooking a hamburger?"

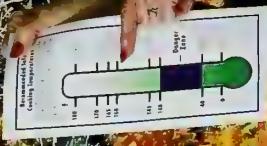
A: "The best type of food thermometer to use with thin foods, like hamburgers, is a digital thermometer. The sensor is in the tip, and it gives a fast reading."



September

Fall into Food Safety

September is National Food Safety Education Month® – a favorite time of year for the Meat and Poultry Hotline Staff. Now go ahead – make their day by following the Four Steps to Food Safety!



Meet Karen...



11 years with Hotline

- Grandmother
- Gourmet cook
- University of Maryland fan

...the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
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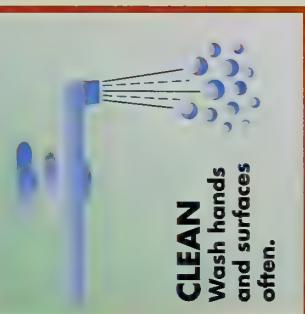
www.fsis.usda.gov

September

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Food Safety Education on Wheels

Is the USDA Food Safety Mobile coming your way? Check the upcoming schedule at www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/food_safety_mobile/index.asp



The Four Steps to Food Safety

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						Labor Day																							



"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"

Q: "Do you have any microwave safety tips?"

A: "When cooking in a microwave oven, cover, stir, and turn food for even cooking. Observe standing time. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food."

Contact Info

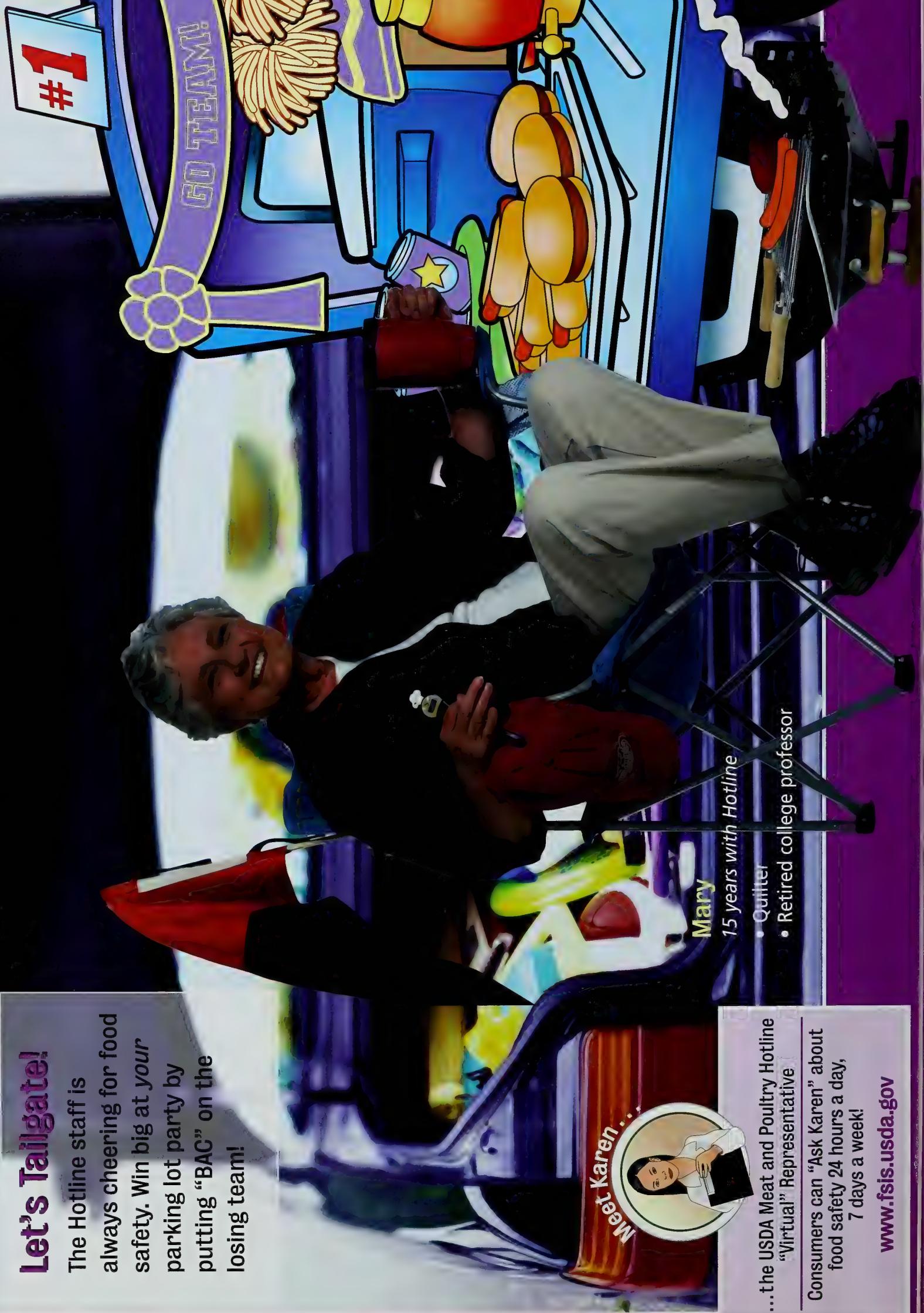
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October

Let's Tailgate!

The Hotline staff is always cheering for food safety. Win big at your parking lot party by putting "BAC" on the losing team!



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Mary
15 years with Hotline
• Quilter
• Retired college professor

October

Hotline Hot Topics

Warm up to these food safety tips for keeping hot food hot and cold food cold at your tailgate party.

- Grill hot dogs until hot and steamy and hamburgers until they reach 160 °F on a food thermometer.
- Foods like cold fried chicken should go directly from the refrigerator into the cooler. Include a cold pack.
- Use insulated containers for hot items like stews and chili. Pack them right before you leave and don't open them until serving time.

Food Safety Education on Wheels

Request a visit from the Food Safety Mobile! Here are three ways to do so:

- Go to www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/food_safety_mobile/index.asp
- Send an E-mail to foodsafetymobile@fsis.usda.gov
- Call (301) 504-9605



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Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov

Q: "How can I keep frozen foods safe during a power failure?"

A: "A full freezer will keep foods safe for 48 hours. A partially filled one lasts for 24 hours. The key is to make sure products are 'fridge cold' (40 °F). If more time has elapsed, check each product with a food thermometer. If it still has ice crystals, it's okay."

November

Let's Talk Turkey!

The Hotline celebrates this all-American holiday with some simple, but critical guidelines. So roll up your sleeves – it's time to talk turkey!



...the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
“Virtual” Representative
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food safety 24 hours a day,
7 days a week!
www.fsis.usda.gov

Marilyn

17 years with Hotline

- Purdue University booster
- Exercise buff
- Singer in national choir

November

Hotline Hot Topics

Basic Turkey HOW-TOs:

1. Remove the neck and giblets.
2. Combine stuffing ingredients just before cooking. For optimal safety, cook stuffing outside the bird in a casserole. If you plan to cook the stuffing in the turkey, fill it loosely just before cooking.
3. Place turkey in an oven set to no lower than 325 °F. If desired, a "tent" of foil may be placed over the turkey for the first 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
4. To check if the turkey has reached a safe internal temperature, insert a food thermometer into the thickest part of the turkey's inner thigh without touching the bone.
 - The turkey is done when the food thermometer reads 180 °F.
 - The stuffing should reach 165 °F.
5. Let turkey "rest" at room temperature for 20 minutes – then remove stuffing and start carving.

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11
13	14	15	16	17	18
20	21	22	23	24	25
27	28	29	30	26	

Contact Info

Meat and Poultry Hotline:
1-888-MPHotline
TTY:
1-800-256-7072

E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov
Web site:
www.fsis.usda.gov



Q: "What is the safest way to thaw a frozen turkey?"

A: "The safest way is to defrost it in the refrigerator. Allow 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey. If you are running short on time, you can thaw it in airtight packaging in cold water (change the water every 30 minutes so the turkey continues to thaw) or in the microwave (cook immediately)."

"Hello...Meat and Poultry Hotline!"



December

Home for the Holidays

'Tis the season for family, friends, and fancy foods – but “BAC” is never welcome at traditional holiday gatherings. The Hotline staff has some helpful advice for this season of festivities – so be happy, stay healthy, and enjoy!



Rita

1 year with Hotline
• Texas sports fan
• Former teacher
• Worked with TX Cooperative Extension for 25 years



...the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
“Virtual” Representative
Consumers can “Ask Karen” about
food safety 24 hours a day,
7 days a week!
www.fsis.usda.gov

December

Hotline Hot Topics

Celebrate by following these guidelines when preparing, serving, or bringing food this season.

- Going to a party? Transport **hot foods and dips** in insulated containers and carry the serving bowls separately.
- Reheat make-ahead meals** to 165 °F before serving. Foods such as quiches or soufflés should be refrigerated if you aren't serving them immediately.
- Foods containing unpasteurized or uncooked eggs may cause foodborne illness. If an item like Caesar salad or eggnog **contains uncooked eggs**, consider ordering something else.
- Keep holiday cream pies and cakes** with whipped-cream and cream-cheese frostings refrigerated. Avoid licking the spoon when mixing cookie dough or cake batters that contain uncooked eggs.

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Food Safety Education on Wheels

The USDA Food Safety Mobile has appeared at such events as the Kentucky Derby, Cheyenne Frontier Days, and dozens of local, State, and national events. Check out news releases and video at www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/mobile_news_video_photo_&_images/index.asp



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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Q: "My power went out, and some of the food in my freezer was partially thawed. Is it safe?"

A: "Yes, as long as the food still contains ice crystals or the freezer has not risen above 40 °F."

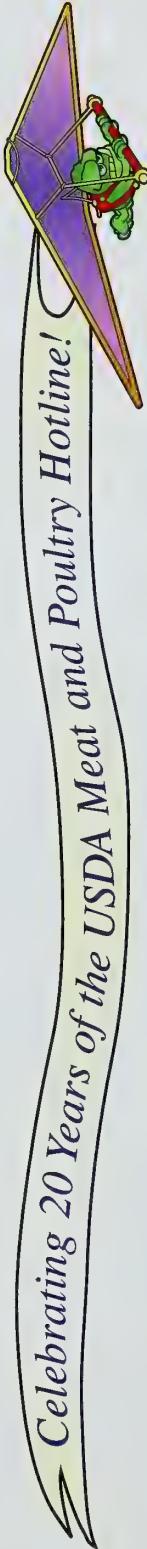


1-888-MPHotline

Two Decades of Food Safety Education ... and Counting!

When the **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline** plugged in its first phone line on July 1, 1985, an incredible interactive program of helping consumers with food safety questions was born. The first caller to the Hotline was advised NOT to mail a favorite sausage to her son, who was stationed halfway around the world in the Indian Ocean. From a staff of 3 to its current 12, food safety specialists – each with at least 1 or 2 college degrees – continue to augment their knowledge of food safety issues to answer callers' increasingly complex inquiries.

Since that day, the Hotline staff has served almost **2 million callers**. From coast to coast and all year 'round, the calls come in and consumers get answers. And as the 20th Anniversary comes and goes . . . the Hotline looks forward to serving new callers every day.



Consumers Ask . . . and USDA Listens

As consumers have become more knowledgeable about food safety and the risk of foodborne illness, the questions have become more technical. These changing interests and growing sophistication are reflected in the calls to the Hotline and in the available resources, too.

- The Hotline handles such emergency situations as foodborne illness outbreaks, power outages, natural disasters, and food product recalls. In these instances, callers get detailed information and next steps.
- Fact sheets and brochures like *Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency* are always available at www.fsis.usda.gov.

¡Hablamos español!

Food safety information is available in Spanish – both electronically and on the phone. The Hotline has bilingual food safety specialists on staff . . . and information is readily available online for viewing and downloading.

Para español:

Llame al teléfono:

1-888-MPHTLINE (1-888-674-6854)



Visite la página electrónica:

www.fsis.usda.gov/en_espanol/index.asp

Hotline hours

- Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, year round
- Thanksgiving Day: 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET
- Recorded food safety messages available 24 hours a day

• Online 24/7: www.fsis.usda.gov

Resources for Media and Education Outreach

Visit our Web site: www.fsis.usda.gov

It gives you access to dozens of downloadable fact sheets and publications for use in your media and outreach efforts. The site also contains hundreds of food safety publications for consumers. Many of these evolved from questions received by the Hotline!

Online Topics Include:

- Cooking for Groups
- Foodborne Illness & Disease
- Safe Food Handling
- Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products Preparation
- Seasonal Food Safety
- Food Labeling
- Appliances and Thermometers

While you're online — be sure to "Ask Karen" and sign up for E-mail alerts!



Stranger Than Fiction . . .

The Hotline staff knows a lot — and chances are, they've heard it all, too! Here are some calls that have gone well beyond the typical question about safe cooking temperatures:

Balcony Tug-of-War . . .

A man called to say he had left his leftover turkey on the balcony to keep it cold. Later he noticed a raccoon gnawing on the leftover bird. He ended up getting into a tug-of-war with the raccoon, and won! Then he called the Hotline to ask, "Is the turkey still safe to eat?"

Fiberglass Thanksgiving?

A woman didn't have enough room in her refrigerator to thaw her turkey, so she put it in the attic to thaw because it was cool up there. Unbeknownst to her, the family cat got into the attic and starting batting the turkey around. When the woman returned for the turkey, it was covered with scratch marks and insulation. She too called to ask, "Can we still eat the turkey?"



In case you're wondering — the answer was a resounding "no" in all three instances!

Behind the Scenes: Decades of Experience and Education Expertise

Susan Conley and Barbara O'Brien boast a combined 37 years with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. Together they share a vision for making food safety a household priority across the U.S.A.



Susan Conley
Director
Food Safety
Education Staff



Barbara M. O'Brien, R.D.
Deputy Director
Food Safety
Education Staff



USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline alumni (Marianne, Diane, Gertie, Robyn, and Linda) gather to celebrate this landmark occasion in USDA consumer education history! All still work at FSIS in other educational capacities.

Media Contact

Have a question about food safety issues? For further information, contact the Hotline staff:

Call:

1-888-MPHotline
(1-888-674-6854)

or

E-mail:
mphotline.fsis@usda.gov

They'd be delighted to provide additional information for your upcoming article!

Camera-Ready Charts

Cold Storage Chart

Since product dates aren't a guide for safe use of a product, consult this chart and follow these guidelines.	
These short, but safe, time limits will help keep refrigerated food (40 °F) from spoiling or becoming dangerous.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase the product before "sell-by" or expiration dates. Follow handling recommendations on product. Keep meat and poultry in its package until just before using. If freezing meat and poultry in its original package longer than 2 months, overwrap these packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper, or place the package inside a plastic bag. 	
Because freezing (0 °F) keeps food safe indefinitely, recommended storage times are for quality only.	

Product	Refrigerator (40 °F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Product	Refrigerator (40 °F)	Freezer (0 °F)
Eggs			Ham, Corned Beef (Cont.)		
Fresh, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Don't freeze	Ham, fully cooked, vacuumed sealed at plant, dated, unopened	"use by" date on package	1 to 2 months
Raw yolks, whites	2 to 4 days	1 year	Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1 to 2 months
Hard cooked	1 week	Doesn't freeze well	Ham, fully cooked, half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Liquid pasteurized eggs, egg substitutes			Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
opened					
unopened	3 days	Doesn't freeze well			
	10 days	1 year			
Mayonnaise			Hamburger, Ground, & Stew Meat		
Commercial			Hamburger & stew meat	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Refrigerate after opening	2 months	Don't freeze	Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb & mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Frozen Dinners & Entrees			Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb & Pork		
Keep frozen until ready to heat	—	3 to 4 months	Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
			Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
			Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
			Variety meats (tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings)	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
			Pre-stuffed, uncooked, pork chops, lamb chops, or chicken breasts stuffed with dressing	1 day	Doesn't freeze well
Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products			Soups & Stews		
Store-prepared (or homemade)			Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
egg, chicken, ham, tuna, macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Doesn't freeze well			
			Meat Leftovers		
Hot Dogs & Luncheon Meats			Cooked meat & meat casseroles	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Hot dogs	1 week	1 to 2 months	Gravy & meat broth	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
opened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months			
unopened package					
Luncheon meats	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months			
opened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months			
unopened package					
Bacon & Sausage					
Bacon	7 days	1 month			
Sausage, raw, from chicken, turkey, pork, beef					
Smoked breakfast links, patties	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months	Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Hard sausage – pepperoni	7 days	1 to 2 months	Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Summer sausage, labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	2 to 3 weeks	1 to 2 months	Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
opened					
unopened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months			
	3 months	1 to 2 months			
Cooked Poultry					
Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months			
Cooked poultry casseroles	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months			
Pieces, plain	3 to 4 days	4 months			
Pieces, covered with broth, gravy					
Chicken nuggets, patties	1 to 2 days	6 months			
	1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months			
Ham, Corned Beef					
Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month			
Ham, canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated,"					
opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months			
unopened	6 to 9 months	Don't freeze			
Ham, fully cooked, vacuumed sealed at plant, undated, unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months			

FOOD	Internal Cooking Temperatures °F
Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160
Turkey, Chicken	165
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Medium Rare	145
Medium	160
Well Done	170
Poultry	
Chicken & Turkey, whole	180
Poultry breasts, roast	170
Poultry thighs, wings	180
Duck & Goose	180
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160
Well Done	170
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg dishes	160
Leftovers & Casseroles	
	165



Editorial Calendar

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- The themes from the 12 monthly spreads offer great "hooks" for your articles and outreach/lecture topics.
- Refer to each monthly section for quick food safety tips and topics – and don't forget to use the Web site for handout and fact sheet resources!

January



January: Superbowl Party!

Message: Use a Food Thermometer

Resource: Thermmy™

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/thermy/brochure.pdf



April: Spring Cleaning

Message: Wash Hands, Utensils, and Surfaces

Resource: Cleanliness Helps Prevent Foodborne Illness

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/cleanliness Helps_Foodborne_Illness/index.asp

July



July: Meat and Poultry Hotline 20th Anniversary

Message: Keep Your Food Safe

Resource: Basics for Handling Food Safely

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/basics_for_handling_food_safely/index.asp

October



October: Let's Tailgate!

Topic: Serving Food Safely for Large Groups

Resource: Cooking for Groups

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/cfg/cfg.htm

March

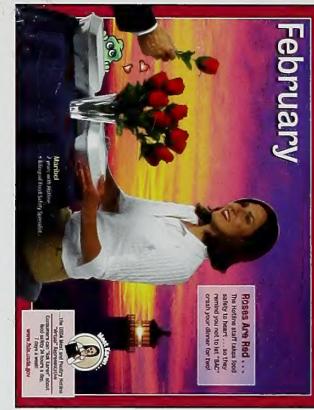


February: A Little Romance...

Topic: Eating Out or Bringing In

Resource: Safe Handling of Take Out Foods

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/takeoutfoods.pdf



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May: Great Grilling!

Topic: Grilling Food Safely

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May

August: Back to School

Topic: Packing Safe Lunches

Resource: Keeping Bag Lunches Safe

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/fact_sheets/keeping_bags_lunches_safe/index.asp



August

November: Turkey Time

Topic: Safely Roasting a Turkey

Resource: Let's Talk Turkey

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/lets_talk_turkey.pdf



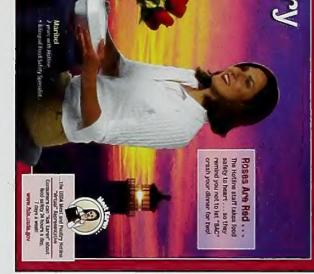
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December: Home for the Holidays

Topic: Safe Holiday Parties

Resource: Focus On: Holiday or Party Buffets

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/focus_on_holiday_party_buffets/index.asp



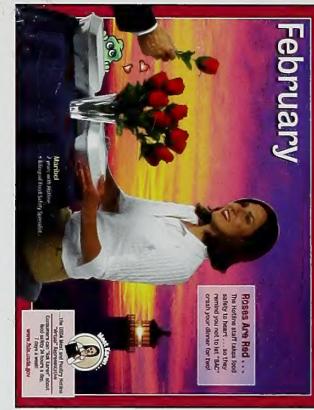
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June: Picture-Perfect Picnics!

Message: Keep Your Food Safe Outdoors

Resource: Food Safety While Hiking, Camping &

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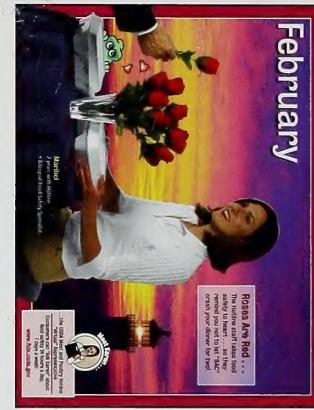
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September: Fall into Food Safety

Message: September is National Food Safety Education Month®

Resource: National Food Safety Education Month®

Link: www.fsis.usda.gov/pubs/nfsem.htm



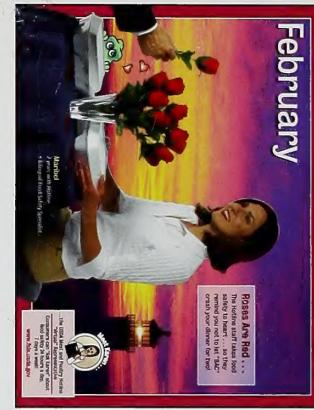
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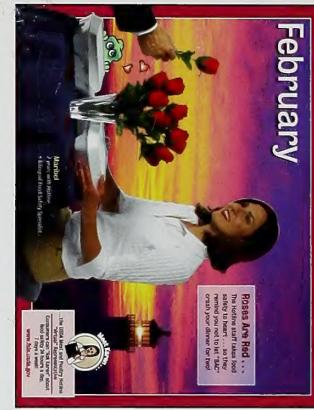
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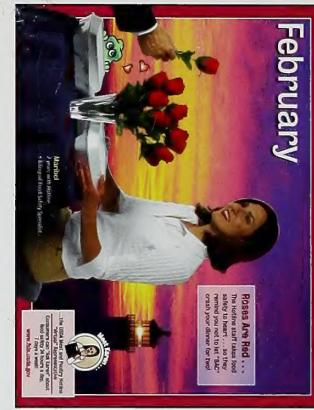
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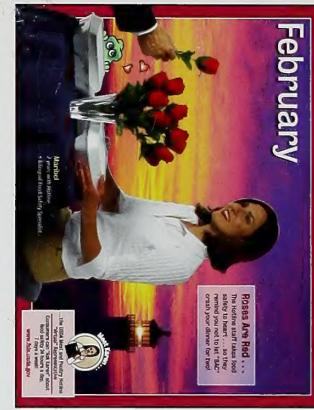
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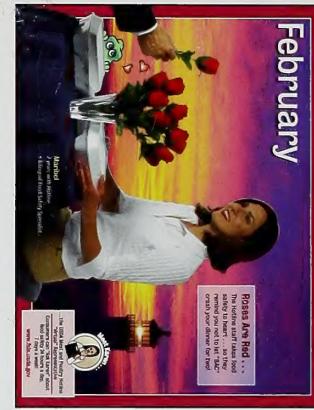
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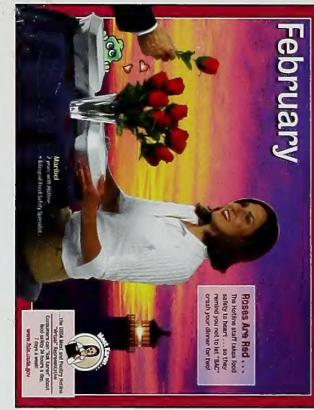
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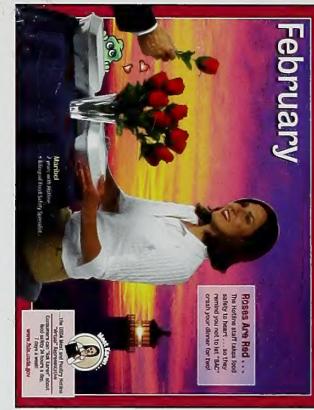
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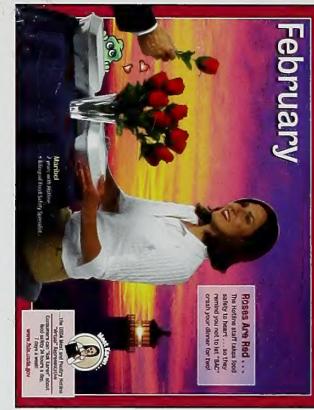
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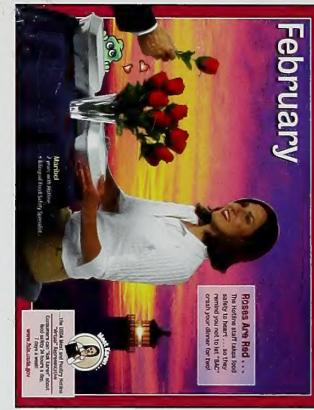
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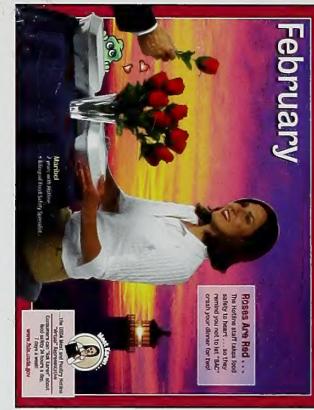
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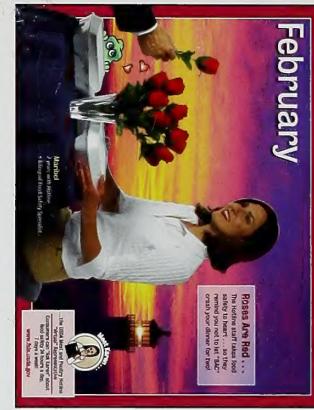
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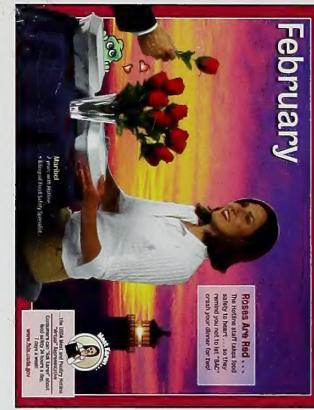
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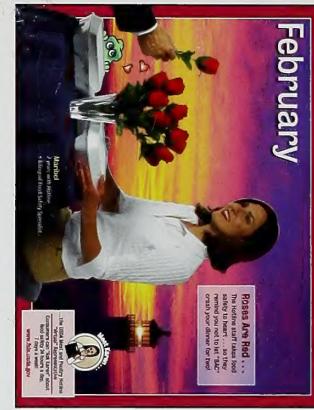
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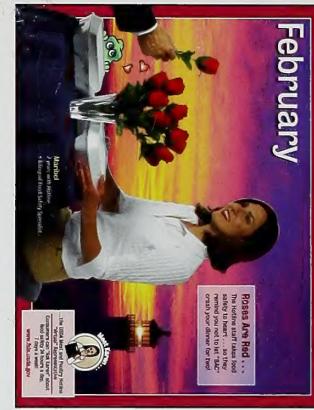
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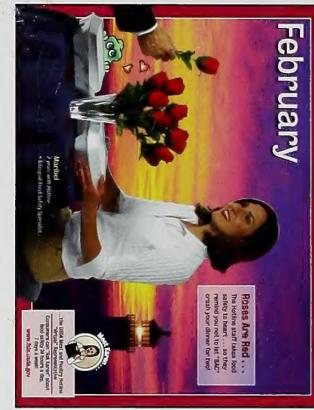
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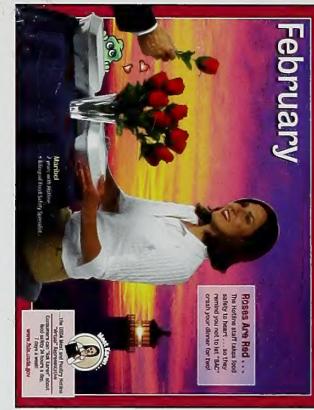
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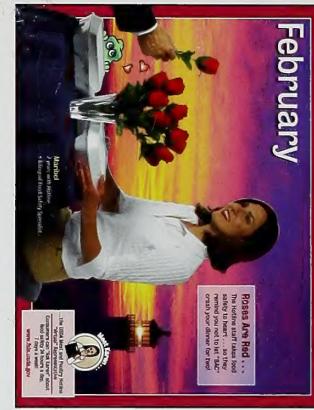
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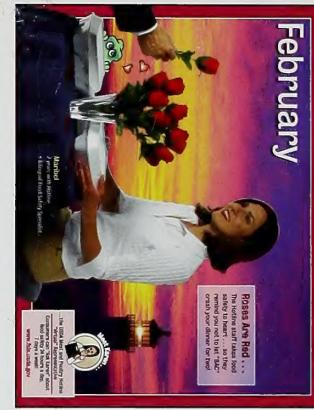
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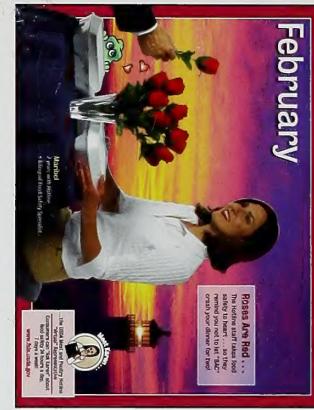
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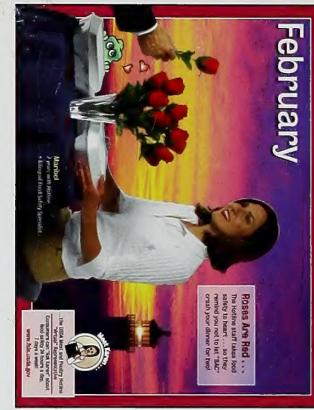
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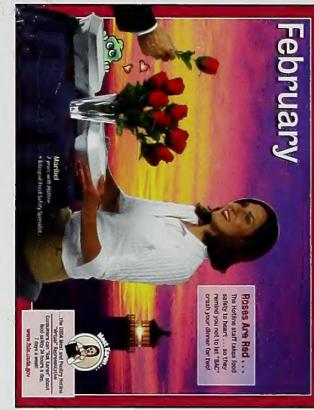
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